5: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
Mountain Orokaiva

2. *Folk Explanations of Exchange*

Having noted how the Orokaiva diagnose cases of social conflict, let us now explore the social philosophy underlying these diagnoses. My argument will be in three steps. First, I shall restate in a more generalised form the Orokaiva ideas hinted at in the previous section; secondly, I shall express these ideas in the form of a more abstract model; thirdly, I shall show how the Orokaiva justify their ideas in terms of their own religio-philosophic system.

Orokaiva social philosophy differs from our own, in the first place by its refusal to recognise the authority of anyone outside the individual's extended family, a characteristic to which I shall give more attention later. If the Orokaiva, by and large, order their lives by the same moral principles, they would explain this by their common belief in certain demigods whom they all regard as their ancestors and as sources of authority, and who created certain institutions embodying moral norms to which they all subscribe. Not only do they obey the precepts of these demi-gods, they also re-enact their feats in ritual and identify with them during ceremonies, and in many of their regular expressive activities.

I shall therefore attempt to reconstruct what these demi-gods are said to have taught the Orokaiva about social relations. This reconstruction requires a brief analysis of some myths in which these teachings are contained. The myths all refer to events in original time. I was told that men, in their primordial or pre-cultural state, were living by the top of Mount Lamington (*Sumbiripa Kanekari*), which is traditionally regarded by the Orokaiva as the centre of the universe (Schwimmer 1969). I collected a number of myths explaining the origin of death, strife, fire, houses, marriage, clothing and several other elements of culture. The demigods who transformed human life by introducing these gifts came 'from the mountain'; Sumbiripa himself was the first man to die. He retired inside the mountain and all those who died later are said to stay with him inside the mountain. Hence the rumblings and tremors emitted by the volcano. Two published sources (Tomlin 1951, Benson 1955) show that these beliefs antedate the eruption of 1951.

While men lived by the top of the volcano, there was, according to the myths, no disunity, no quarrelling and no warfare, and men all ate with one another. As they multiplied greatly, so one of the tales records, some of them settled in an unoccupied place at the foot of a *barivo* tree. There they collected saplings, thatch and lashings to build themselves a village. One man stole lashings prepared by another and used them to build his own house. When the owner of the lashings found the thief, the two started to fight. The men present, one and all, became separated into two contending sides which never stopped fighting. *Emboavo oramiko tiketo ijunu avunu ena*: 'Therefore, from that time onwards, they dwelt separately down-valley and up-mountain.' Having started thus, they continued to be alone (*oenga oenga*) and to fight (*isoro ue mitiatera*). Separately cornered they captured, killed and ate each other and thus they then remained. In a final sentence, the narrator of the myth adds that permanent peace has now come and fighting (*isoro*) is finished.

I could not obtain data that would confirm that this stolen cord represents an umbilical cord and that this myth is about the birth trauma. However, the myth

group.(1) Group planting seems to have been the general pattern in other parts of the Territory too. In the Western District in particular, the Resident Magistrate initiated schemes for cash crop plantations being owned and operated by each village as a whole. Profits were to be used for projects which would be of benefit to the village community (P.A.R. 1913-14:12). About fifty such plantations were established under the scheme.

During this post-war drive (and probably in 1920) a government officer assembled the people of the nine villages(2) of the northern branch of the Asigi tribe and instructed them to choose a site and plant an area of coconuts for the nine villages as a whole.(3)

A central site was chosen near Ongoho on land belonging to the Akute'undi sub-clan (most of the members of which lived in Ongoho village), and about 500 coconuts were planted as a community project by the men of the nine villages.(4) They were to be used exclusively for copra making (there were ample coconut trees in the villages for domestic use) and work and profits were to be shared equally among the able-bodied men. Small plots of rubber and citrus trees had been established at Ongoho under the same scheme a year or two earlier. The citrus was intended to be used primarily as a latex coagulant for the rubber, and only secondarily as a cash crop.

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(1) In some instances in the coastal villages of the Northern District each individual planted his own trees, but all villagers planted in one "village" block on the land of one man or of one descent group.

(2) Ongoho, Hongorata, Iviuru, Sowai, Weki, Ondahari, Oere, Girigirita and Heherita. Sowai and Weki were later abandoned and today their populations live together at a new village named Sotokoiari. Likewise Girigirita and Heherita have amalgamated and moved to a new site. The new village is called Girigirita.

(3) Data in this section of the report was collected by interview only in the villages concerned during April-May 1963.

(4) The annual reports show that in 1921 there were 518 coconut trees over five years old and 1,287 under five years old in the Asigi area. The nine villages listed above comprise about half of the total Asigi population. The 518 mature trees were probably those planted in the villages. Trees in the community block which did not survive were not replaced, and as the ground has not been cleared since the second world war, many have died. There were 198 trees still standing in 1963.

613 general information is already beyond the immediate recall of the surviving Jegase men.

The Sivepe people who belong to Timunu, the second clan represented in our sample, are members of 2 lineages, Pekuna and Hajejopa. Other than clanship the two can reckon no link originating in the 'district' from which both emigrated independently to the neighbourhood of Sivepe; their closely parallel histories of migration, subsequent residence and marriage account for the present firm connection between them.

The largest exogamous groups are lineages, but this rule readily lapses when a lineage achieves a much wider span than average, especially if it becomes scattered for any length of time or in more than one 'hamlet group'.

621 All land around Sivepe and neighbouring villages is divided into named areas which we will call 'blocks'. Each is usually a locality deriving its name from a prominent local natural feature - [103] often a tree or a grove of trees, hence Korinaguzu or Korinaturu. [128] For any subdivisions of a block we use the term 'section' and we refer to either 'blocks' or 'sections' as 'parcels' of land.[1] No correlation is implied between the type of a parcel and the type of rights held to it.

423 All land constituting territory of the Jegase, Timunu or others [428] in the neighbourhood is divided into parcels which are the holdings either of individuals or of full brothers. A man's rights and other property are ideally inherited patrilineally. In some circumstances a definitive division of the father's land may be made among his sons before his death. This usually takes place if the sons already have their own households, if the father is no longer very active in village life or if the younger men are [562] only half-brothers. We know of no instances of a daughter receiving a particular share at the time of such an allocation, but we refer elsewhere to circumstances where women hold land 428 (see Appendix E, p.111).[A] In other cases brothers may jointly hold all the land inherited from their father. This seems to apply particularly to instances where a younger brother is unmarried or has taken temporary employment away from the village

[823] [1] People commonly use the name of a block to refer to any parcel of land, for instance in listing their landholdings. They draw attention to any specific distribution of sections of 1 block among different people only when the context requires them to. On Map 2, where 1 man holds adjacent blocks or 2 adjoining sections on 2 adjacent blocks, the boundary between them is not shown. Only boundaries between different landholders are indicated.

A, [See Category 428, p. 111--Analyst] B, [See Category 102, p 40--Analyst]

Changes in the Yega settlement pattern after 1960

361 178 Influenced by rapid changes in land use, the location of Yega residences radically altered after 1950. Figs 1, 2 and 3 illustrate the evolution of settlement up till 1950. In 1950 the Yega lived in small villages spread along four miles of coastline. In 1952-3 occurred the major amalgamation of dwellings into Beporo [166] village already mentioned (p. 29). Members of all clans took part in this move. Although none of the other villages went out of existence at this time, all diminished in size while Beporo grew 161 rapidly. Table 4 shows the estimated distribution of population 162 [TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 42]

Table 4

Distribution of total Yega population by villages in 1960, 1962, and 1964

361 162 103 161

	Village name	1960 estimated	1962 November	1964 July
A.	Coastal			
	Surilai	60	52	61
	Niniyanda	44	9	5
	Kanaunje	15	17	11
	Basabuga	17	19	14
	Tarebosusu	7	10	Nil
	Banumo	14	8	10
	Gombe	19	15	19
	Siumbago	9	13	Nil
	Beporo	335	275	164
	Gona Mission	7	6	18
	Subtotal	527	424	302
B.	Inland			
	Gatara	6	6	6
	Konje	Nil	6	97
	Otobejare	Nil	8	13
	Imangada	Nil	3	8
	Mumburada	Nil	17	47
	Ononda (D.A.S.F.)*	Nil	5	1
	Ononda	Nil	41	66
	Binjapada	Nil	51	61
	Jamberoda	Nil	Nil	15
	Subtotal	6	137	314
	Total	533	561	616

* Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries indicated that these informants had made no attempt to build houses of their own but were using the facilities available at the D.A.S.F. Ononda settlement.

A. [For figs. 1, 2, & 3, see Category 361, p. 41--Analyst]

limit the relevance and power of anthropological study. A cataclysm of such awesome proportions must obviously have had psychological as well as social effects on Orokaiva individuals since the same cataclysm was, after all, experienced in one form or another by everybody. If a culturally homogeneous group has any intellectual facility in the development of common symbols and the transformation of its symbol system, then it is reasonable to suppose that the eruption would have social effects of this less tangible kind.

The Mount Lamington eruption, viewed in this way, offers a case history of theoretical importance. Where the immediate cause of relocation is a natural disaster, we are dealing with contingency in its purest form: an event no sociological (or psychological) theory could possibly predict. Can such an event change the structure of a people's symbolic thought? If it can, then this would cast doubt on any claim that cultural systems are determinate, as they could be changed at any time by unpredictable contingencies. The question whether the content of the symbol systems and social systems of specific cultures is determinate has been raised throughout the work of Lévi-Strauss. Determinacy may be found, however, in the processes of human thought as we seek to comprehend an event, however unpredictable. If our method of understanding humans is the analysis of symbolic thought, then the study of unpredictable contingencies is important in revealing the genesis of symbolic thought.

EXPLANATIONS OF THE DISASTER

I showed in an earlier work that Mount Lamington has long had a central position in the Orokaiva world order (Schwimmer 1969: 5–6). In fact, the Orokaiva regard Mount Lamington as the center of the cosmos. It is the place where, in Orokaiva myth, death, warfare, and fire originated. Many of the transforming deities who are said to have established the rituals and social customs of the Orokaiva came from the crater of this mountain. The division of the populations of the Northern District into tribes or language groups supposedly occurred at the same place. The mountain is called Sumbiripa Kanekari, 'the separation of Sumbiripa', after the myth in which the mountain opened up and split into several unscalable crags. Sumbiripa was hunting on the mountain with

Map IX

[End Map 8]

Source: Waddell & Krinks 1968: 34

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22: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1969 QJ23 Orokaiva QJ23
Mount Lamington

Map XI

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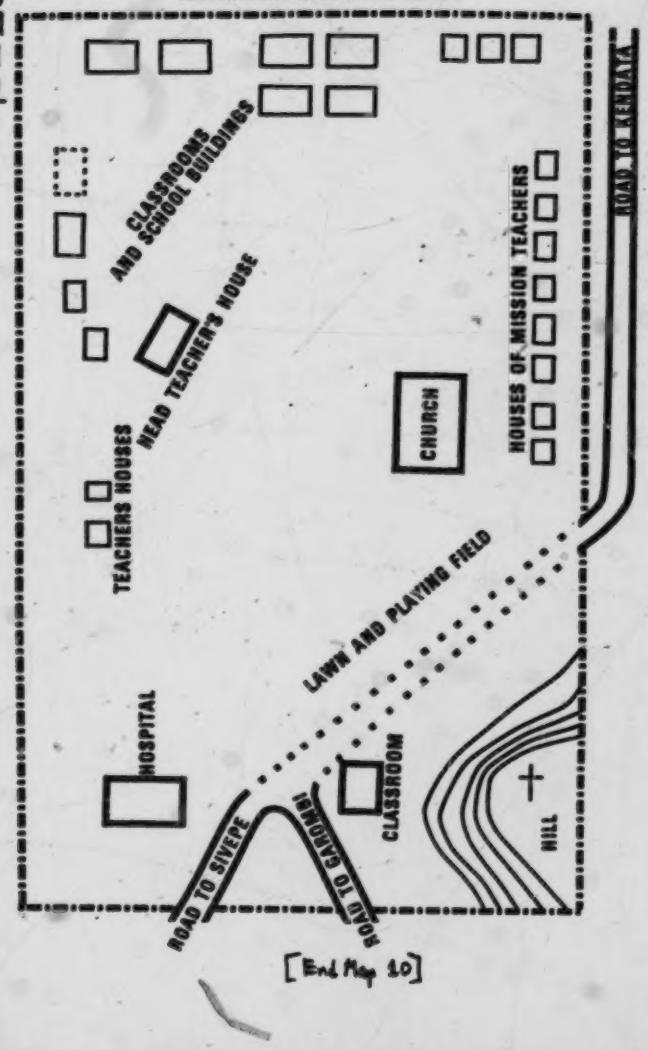
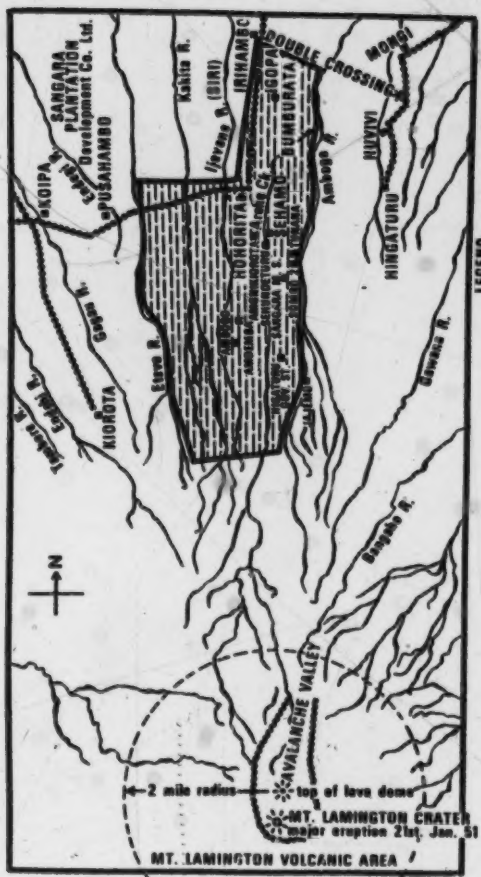
SASEMBATA MISSION STATION



[End Map 10]

22: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1969 OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
Mount Lamington



Map XIII

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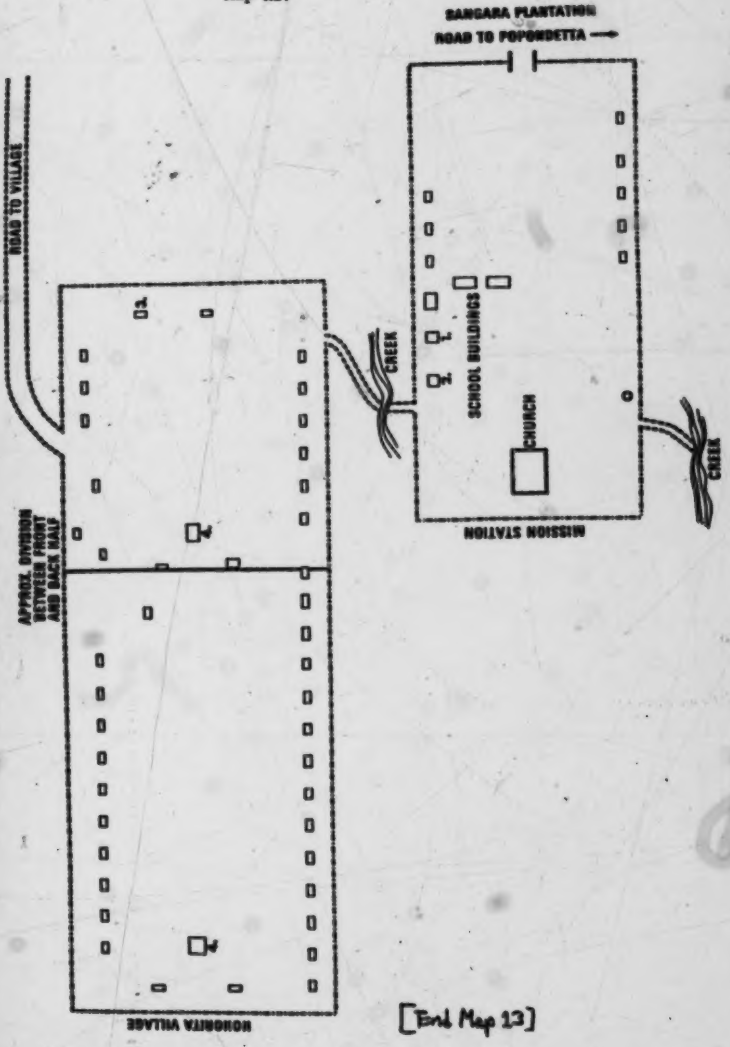
[End Map 12]

Map XIV



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[End Map 13]